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ABSTRACT

The Viewpoint series are condensed topical lessons, designed for social studies or English classes from sixth grade to college level. Number six in the series concentrates on minorities and education while other issues in the series relate to minorities and news media, police, jobs, courts, prisons, and housing. Minorities and education are explored in relation to equal opportunities in public schools, educational statistics, culturally biased textbooks, desegregation efforts, I.Q. tests, language barriers, and solutions to obtaining quality education for all minority groups. Supplementary reading materials are suggested and a student quiz is reproduced. Each of the Viewpoints in the series is available in classroom quantities from the Foundation for Change. (Author/KSM)

MINORITIES and EDUCATION

VIEWPOINT #6

Minority Outlook on Current Issues

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Schools Flunk Equal Opportunities Exam

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Public schools help sift the "winners" from the "losers." They put some children on the learning track leading to jobs and middle-class America, and others on the track that ends in failure and unemployment. The way it works out, the middle-class white child has the advantage, and the poor minority child is disadvantaged.

Data on poor Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano and Indian students show that they drop out of high school two to four times as often as whites, they average two or more years behind the national norm in reading and arithmetic, and they get suspended and put in classes for the "retarded" more than any other group.

Blaming the Victim

In the 1960s, poor Black and Spanish-speaking students were called "culturally deprived" by many white educators and blamed for their failures. But minority educators objected, saying: It is not the children who fail the schools, but the schools who fail the children.

This built-in failure began when slaves were forbidden by law to read and write: "A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master," explained a slaveholder. After the Civil War, segregated education came about by law in the South (de jure segregation), and by ghetto housing patterns in the North (de facto segregation). In practice, segregated education has meant inferior education for non-white minorities. By 1912 the average yearly expenditure for public school children was $15 per child. But for Black youngsters in separate schools it was $1.71.

Lessons in Racism

Even the 1954 Supreme Court decision outlawing racial segregation in public schools has not closed the educational gap in the South. And court orders to correct "racial balance" have not brought about quality integrated education in the North. Whites have argued about the issue of busing, rather than what kind of an education all children get at the end of the ride.

This legacy of racism has brought ghetto schools in the big cities to boiling point. Parents say some ghetto schools perpetuate racism by teaching white middle-class values. These schools fail when—

- curriculum and textbooks look at the world with white eyes, ignoring the experience of minorities.
- tests are written by whites for whites, discriminating against the culture of minorities.
- many teachers have low expectations of minority children, thereby stifling their drive to learn.

The solution minority parents want is the right to control the educational destiny of their children. They want school boards, administration, counselors and teachers to be accountable for the academic achievement of their students. They want a deciding voice in how their schools are run. Above all, they want schools and children to succeed.

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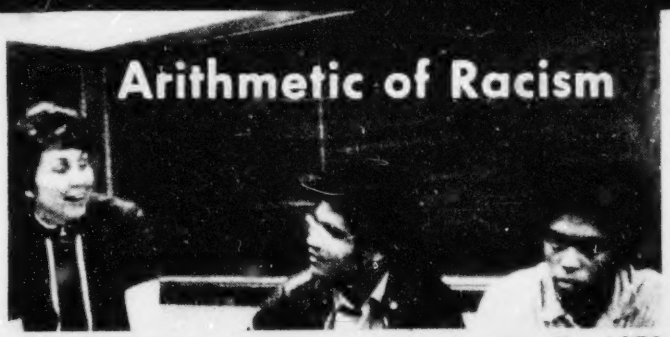
Quality education is the goal of minority communities.



Arithmetic of Racism

who's behind in school? . . . . . .nationally, 1970
26% of Blacks are 2 or more years below grade level;
9% of whites are 2 or more years behind.
item: For Mexican Americans the lag is 3 years behind the white average in the 12th grade. Puerto Ricans and Indians end up 3.7 and 3.2 years behind whites.

who drops out of high school? . . . . .nationally, 1970
22% of Blacks are dropouts at 16 years of age;
12% of whites are dropouts at the same age.
item: In the Boston public schools, 90% of Puerto Rican junior high school students drop out. In New York City, Puerto Ricans have the highest dropout rate of all groups. Chicanos drop out at a rate 3 times that of Anglos. Half of all Indian youths never get beyond 8th grade.

who graduates high school? . . . . . .nationally, 1970
56% of Blacks are high school graduates;
78% of whites are graduates.
item: In 1970, only 7 Puerto Ricans graduated from Boston public high schools, and 2 went on to college.

who goes to segregated schools? . . .nationally, 1970
49% of Black students are still in schools over 80% Black.
14% of Black students are still in 100% segregated schools.

who goes to integrated schools? . .nationally, 1970-71
33% of Black students attend majority-white schools.
(majority white is 50% or more white)
item: South leads in integrated schools. Northern cities show drop in the % of Blacks in majority-white schools since 1968.

who buses to school? . . . . . .nationally, 1970
Nearly 45% of all students are bused.
Less than 3% are bused for integration.

what happens to "integrated" teachers? . .since 1964
More than 6,000 Black educators lost their jobs, and thousands more were demoted since "desegregation" in the South.
item: A Louisiana Black principal was demoted to teacher and given the tasks of janitor.

who gets expelled or suspended? . . . . .since 1964
11,140 Southern Black students have been expelled or suspended, and 2,000 have been arrested for school integration and civil rights activities.
item: "The Martin Luther Kings and other leaders of tomorrow are not being allowed to graduate."
— Natl. Education Assn.

WE MADE IT IN THE SCHOOLS, WHY CAN'T THEY?
Debunking the Myth. Big-city schools have always failed the poor. In the 1920s white immigrants had a school dropout rate of 80%, twice as large as today. Some of the immigrant poor "made it" because there were unskilled jobs open to them. Today's technology has no place for undereducated minorities. *— Center for Urban Education*

ARE YOUR TEXTBOOKS "

A TALK TO TEACHERS "If one managed t
so that Negroes learned more about them
you would be liberating white people who
the reason is that if you are compelled t
you must lie about it all. If you have to
pretend that I hoed all that cotton just beca
thing to yourself. You are mad."

Black History

Do you read about slavery
Yankee teacher in a Kentuck
Teacher: "Now children, y
they have straight hair and w
Teacher: "No, they are no
they formed this great gov
makes them better than you a
Teacher: "Yes, but what e
Pupils: "Got it off us, stole it

Indian History

What do your school books t
After Congress passed the I
were dragged from their
force. Jackson's treaties wi
of bribery, threats, force a
as prisoners, put in concen

Puerto Rican History

Do your school books te
present)? Here is a review of
"All the books accept the
strap' as a glowing succe
Puerto Rican economy is
now import more than 9
New York or other Amer
live on $1.37 a day. . . .
about just is not there."

Chicano History

Do you read that there w
Anglo-Saxon pioneers arrive
"Textbook after textbook su
Spanish and Indian and n
Indians native to the regio
pioneer, with his superior
and brought order out of cha
— in T

TELLING

"When we look at the chronological-type histories we find that they are not histories of America or the United States as a nation or land considering all of the different peoples involved, but generally they are histories of the European arrival in and occupation of America. But once you take that subject of the European occupation of North America and

CULTURALLY DEPRIVED"?

o change the curriculum in all the schools
selves and their real contribution to culture,
know nothing about their own history. And
o lie about one aspect of anybody's history,
lie about my real role here, if you have to
use I loved you, then you have done some-

—**James Baldwin, 1963**

from a slave's viewpoint? Here is what ex-slaves told a
y school for freed Blacks during Reconstruction:

ou don't think white people are better than you because
hite faces?" **Pupils:** "No, sir."
better, but they are different; they possess great power,
ernment, they control this vast country. . . . Now what
re?" **Pupils:** "Money" (unanimous shout).
nabied them to obtain it? How did they get the money?"
off us — all!" — *quoted in the* American Missionary *X. 6 (June 1866).*

ell you about President Andrew Jackson's Indian policy?

ndian Removal Act in 1830, more than 125,000 Indians
homes and deported west of the Mississippi by military
h the Indians — there were 94 in all — were masterpieces
d fraud. Indians were hunted down like animals, bound
ntration camps. About one third of the Indians died.

—*summarized from* Chronicles of Indian Protest, *Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1971.*

l you the full story of Operation Bootstrap (1948 to
12 recent supplementary readers on Puerto Rican history.

phase of U. S. economic policy called 'Operation Boot-
ss. Unmentioned are such realities as these: 80% of the
now controlled by U. S. corporations; Puerto Rico must
% of the goods it consumes; Prices are higher than in
ican cities. Yet one quarter of all Puerto Rican families
The prosperity that all the American history books write

—*in "Distortions and Omissions in Children's History Books," by Irma Garcia in* Interracial Books for Children, *Spring 1972.*

ere thriving towns in California and Texas long before
d?

pports the notion that the early settlers of the Southwest —
ixed-blood pioneers who came from Mexico, as well as
n — wandered around in confusion until the Anglo-Saxon
wisdom and clearer vision vaulted the Rocky Mountains
os."

e Excluded Student, *a U.S. Commission of Civil Rights report, 1972.*

IT WHITE

the subsequent adventures of European people — then it follows that Indians are only significant when they are problems for the Europeans, Chicanos are only significant when they are difficult in the Southwest, Blacks are only significant when they pose problems as slaves or in the civil rights movement."

— *Dr. Jack Forbes to Calif. Board of Education, 1/4/72*

If you attend a desegregated school, this quiz will help grade your school on its equal education efforts. If you attend a segregated school — for minorities **or** whites — this quiz will tell you if you have an equal chance for quality education.

Curriculum

Are all students assigned to read newspapers and magazines that give the minorities' point of view? **yes** — **no** —
Do you learn how whites control many institutions and communities at the expense of minorities? **yes** — **no** —
Has your class discussed the irony of our Declaration of Independence being prepared by slaveowners? **yes** — **no** —
Are minority parents and educators consulted in effective use of multi-racial instruction materials? **yes** — **no** —

Teacher

Does the teacher respect cultures and life styles different from his or her own? **yes** — **no** —
Do teachers expect equal academic effort by minority children? **yes** — **no** —
Are minority teachers given positions of authority in the school? **yes** — **no** —
Are racism awareness workshops for teachers and administrators regularly held in the school? **yes** — **no** —
Does the teacher treat racial discrimination as society's problem rather than as a "Black problem"? **yes** — **no** —

Students

Are minority students encouraged to "be themselves" even if different from most of their fellow students? **yes** — **no** —
Where there is ability grouping, do students in the lower groups regularly advance into higher groups? **yes** — **no** —
Do students take active part in discussion and debate of current minority rights issues? **yes** — **no** —

School Board

Does the school board have an organized program to overcome any racism in the school district? **yes** — **no** —
Does the school board speak publicly in behalf of integration in housing and employment? **yes** — **no** —
Are school administrators drawn from all minority groups represented in the school district? **yes** — **no** —
Does the school board reflect the racial and economic makeup of the community it serves? **yes** — **no** —

Parents and Community

Do all parents, regardless of race and economic background, feel welcome at school? **yes** — **no** —
Do guidance counselors and school psychologists have evening schedules for daytime working parents? **yes** — **no** —
Does the community have control over finances, hiring, curriculum and policy decisions in the district? **yes** — **no** —

Rate Your School

Quality Education for All: pass — fail —

Assignment: Submit this column with your rating to your parents' association, school administrator and local school board. Explain the reasons for your rating in a letter.

— *adapted from* Your School Desegregation?, *Integrated Education Associates, 1971*

CHANGE: → Quality Education for All

UPI photo

SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS

Integration. Civil rights activists pushed for quality integrated education in the 1950s and 1960s hoping it would give minority youngsters an equal chance to learn. Some integration programs come under fire by whites who don't want to bus their children to mixed schools, and by minorities who find that integrated schools controlled by whites have not eliminated racism in the classrooms or curriculum. Some Blacks also challenge the idea that Black children can't learn unless they are in the same classrooms as whites. The national NAACP continues to fight for quality integrated schooling. Recently, however, the Atlanta, Ga., branch of the NAACP called for a minimum of classroom integration in exchange for a maximum of integrated administrative positions in the city's school system.

Community Control. With integration at a standstill, minority groups are pushing for quality equal education in ghetto communities. The National Black Political Convention went on record in 1972 for "quality education in the Black community through community-controlled state districts and a guaranteed equal share of all educational money." The chairman of the Political Convention explained: "We're talking about who makes the rules, who does the hiring, who makes up the budget, who makes up the curriculum. That's community control." Supporters of community control say that a partnership of professionals, parents and students is the only way to make education work in the ghettos. They point out that community control has been working for whites in suburban communities.

A Bilingual Education Law was passed by Massachusetts in 1972. The law declares that classes conducted exclusively in English are "inadequate" for the education of children whose native tongue is another language, and that bilingual education programs are necessary " to insure equal educational opportunity to every child." Massachusetts became the first state to **require** school districts to provide such programs. Other states simply **permit** them. In 1973 a Federal judge ordered special curriculum to meet the needs of students of Mexican descent in Portales, New Mexico.

Training for Racism Awareness. Some school districts are educating teachers and supervisors in white racism as a first step in ferreting it out of the educational system. The school board of predominantly white Ann Arbor, Michigan, makes courses in racism awareness a requirement for hiring. In 1972, some educators in Illinois took racism training sponsored by the Illinois Education Association and the Equal Education Opportunities Institute.

WHAT COLOR IS AN I.Q. TEST?

Are these questions from an Intelligence Quotient test for junior high school students culturally and racially biased?

Which of the following is most like *doctor lawyer teacher*
a. *accountant* b. *policeman* c. *electrician* d. *student* e. *beautician* **Answer: a.**

People prefer paying by check rather than cash because
a. *it's easier* b. *they can keep a record of their expenses* c. *it makes them feel more important* d. *it maintains their credit with the bank.* **Answer: b.**

"Let me write the tests and it might be fair. I'd talk about chitlins and two rooms and a patch versus six rooms and a bath. I'd talk about black-eyed peas and collard greens and the whites wouldn't know nothin!"
— Aaron Henry, Mississippi civil rights leader

WHAT COLOR IS THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE?

Black actor Ossie Davis has a lesson for teachers and students on racism in language. He looked up Whiteness and Blackness in *Roget's Thesaurus* and found:

WHITENESS has 134 synonyms - 44 are favorable; examples: *purity, cleanliness, innocent, fair, trustworthy.* Only 10 synonyms are negative; example: *whitewash.*

BLACKNESS has 120 synonyms - 60 are unfavorable. Some are: *blotch, smut, murky, evil, deadly, dirty, wicked.* There are 20 synonyms directly related to race, such as: *Negress, nigger, darky, blackamoor.*

"The English language is my enemy. It teaches the Black child 60 ways to hate himself and the white child 60 ways to aid and abet him in the crime." — Ossie Davis

additional copies of this brochure are available for 2 1/2¢ each at

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READING SHELF

- *Crisis In The Classroom, by Charles Silberman. Vintage Books-Random House/71.*
- *What Black Educators Are Saying, edited by Nathan Wright, Hawthorn/70.*
- *Race and Education: Integration and Community Control, American Education Publications Unit Book. AEP-Xerox/71.*
- *Death At An Early Age, by Jonathan Kozol. Houghton Mifflin Co./67.*
- *Minorities In Textbooks: A Report for the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith, by Michael Kane. Quadrangle Books/70.*
- *Test Your Textbooks, a brochure available from Foundation For Change.*

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